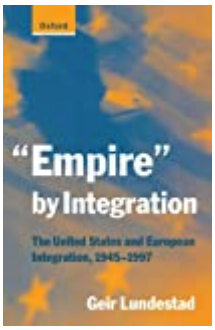
H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Lundestad; Geir. *"Empire" by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997.* New York, and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. x + 199 pp. $19.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-19-878211-7.

Reviewed by Todd Alan Good (Bowling Green State University)

Published on H-Diplo (March, 2001)

Geir Lundestad's *"Empire" by Integration: the United States and European Integration, 1945-1997* is a welcome addition to the fields of both U.S. diplomatic history and European Integration studies. Lundestad, the Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute and a Professor of International History at the University of Oslo, addresses a visible weakness in both fields: the lack of a competent synthesis of America's role from the Marshall Plan era to the present. In Lundestad's opinion, scholars such as Michael Hogan and John Gillingham have effectively addressed the initial stages in European integration. In many respects, though, his account is a continuation of the work of Pascaline Winand, whose excellent work only covers the Eisenhower and Kennedy eras. [1]

Lundestad's work can be divided into four sections. The first addresses American motives for supporting European integration and the positions of public officials towards Europe. This section contains a discussion of European integration from 1945 to 1950. The second section is essentially a narrative of US diplomatic relations with Europe, focusing mainly upon security issues. The third section of Lundestad's work addresses the economic challenge which European integration posed to the United States from 1945 to 1972. The final section focuses upon the relationship between the United States and Europe after World War II and includes an exploration of Lundestad's concept of "empire" as it applied to the United States.

According to Lundestad, after a period of initial hesitation from 1945 to 1946, US officials openly supported European cooperative ventures such as the Common Market, the European Coal and Steel Community, and the European Defense Community. A shift in the United States' public position towards European integration occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s and continued under Reagan, who advocated "burden-sharing" among the NATO allies and favored increased European defense spending to counter the challenges posed to the West by the Soviet Union. George Bush, Reagan's successor, downplayed any public skepticism towards Europe and stressed Atlantic unity, papering over trade disputes for the sake of political cooperation. Finally, Lundestad addresses the public position of Bill Clinton, who consistently supported European integration, including the move towards monetary union.

Although Lundestad believes that the politicians' public statements concerning European integration were a fair reflection of internal policy, the motives for American support were in fact rather complex and fluid. According to Lundestad, the United States consistently supported European integration for five reasons. In ascending order, the reasons for United States support included:

a desire to implement the federalist American model in Europe; the belief that an integrated Europe would be more efficient and rational; the hope that European cooperation in the security and economic spheres would reduce America's burden; the belief that a strong Europe would help contain the Soviet Union; and finally, the hope that tying Germany into federal European structures would prevent future problems with this state as well. [2] These motives were the central feature of the 1945-1950 period when the United States took the lead in promoting European integration, primarily through the Marshall Plan. Lundestad argues that the United States was left with little other choice, since Britain and France – the obvious choices to lead Europe – were of little help. Faced with this dilemma, it was up to the United States to oversee European post-war reconstruction on numerous levels.

Once European integration had taken substantive form, the United States had a primary condition for a united Europe: it had to remain friendly to the United States, and both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations frowned upon an independent "third force." To prevent European security arrangements from developing into a "third force," European rearmament had to fit into the larger Atlantic framework – according to Lundestad the code phrase for American leadership. For example, the US insisted that European military contributions be placed in NATO. Thus, any European defense scheme, such as the EDC or the WEU, had to be a component of, not independent from, NATO – an organization in which the US had a guaranteed leadership role.

Lundestad then turns to the first of two challenges to American support of a united Western Europe: the political challenge of Charles de Gaulle. In Lundestad's opinion, de Gaulle's primary interest during this period was the restoration of French glory, and not the securing of commercial advantages for France (as Andrew Moravcsik, in particular, has argued). [3] Lundestad is at his best here, pointing out that de Gaulle's demands for French nuclear independence – withdrawal from the NATO command structure, strengthening of the Paris-Bonn axis and treatment as an equal by the United States – led to a strained relationship with Kennedy. In spite of de Gaulle's continued challenges, Lundestad believes it was Kennedy's popularity that kept West Germany in the US/NATO camp and frustrated de Gaulle's attempts to strengthen the Paris-Bonn axis at Washington's expense. [4] Furthermore, de Gaulle's efforts did not prevent the Kennedy and Johnson administrations from abandoning their support of European integration, since institutions such as the Common Market were seen as vital to keeping France tied to Western Europe. Any withdrawal of support would thus play into de Gaulle's hand. Lundestad also states that the Johnson administration's passive response to de Gaulle's withdrawal from the NATO command structure was partially due to the President's preoccupation over Vietnam, and not evidence of any significant US policy change concerning Europe. [5]

A more hands off approach in general towards Europe under Nixon and Kissinger complemented the alteration of American policy in 1962/63 under Kennedy. Although Nixon declared 1973 the "Year of Europe," the United States became rather ambivalent towards Europe for four particular reasons. First, according to Kissinger, the United States did not play a significant role in the future of a united Europe. Second, the long-held belief that the United States and Europe shared common views on particular issues was challenged by the realities of *Ostpolitik*, differences in Middle Eastern policy, and economic disagreements. Additionally, by promoting European integration along federal lines, Washington distanced itself from its strongest allies, such as the United Kingdom. Finally, Nixon and Kissinger believed that relations with de Gaulle would improve.

Lundestad concludes the narrative of US policy towards Europe by addressing the period from the Carter to the Clinton administrations. Jimmy Carter criticized the Nixon administration's abstinence from Europe and favored "trilateralism" between the US, Europe, and Japan. Although Carter stated that the United States would give Europe "unqualified support," in fact the Carter administration spent little time on Europe and relations changed little. However, US policy changed under Reagan, due in part to a more active Europe (compare the period of Eurosclerosis in the 1970s v. the era of the Single Europe Act) and Reagan's relationship with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Although publicly supportive of the SEA, Reagan and his advisors feared "fortress Europe," and in particular its effects on American agriculture. In response, Lundestad argues, this period saw the "coolest" American/European relations ever due to "transatlantic quarrels over East/West issues." [6] In turn, affairs improved under George Bush, who was bolstered in his efforts to improve relations by economic reports which showed that trade creation between the US and the EC states after the enlargement of the EC outweighed possible trade diversion. The Clinton administration continued Bush's policy and supported European Monetary Union, a common security and foreign policy, and favored both the inclusion of new member states and in-

creased avenues of cooperation among member states. Lundestad correctly points out that the end of the Cold War allowed Clinton to grant the Europeans more freedom in security matters. NATO, however, still retained primacy in this realm.

The possible economic conflict between the Common Market and the United States is the second challenge to American-European relations and comprises the third section of this work. Although the Common Market could harm American economic interests, Lundestad believes this challenge was tempered by two factors. First, political objectives (containment of the USSR and Germany in particular) took precedence over any economic objectives; European integration was deemed necessary in spite of any adverse economic costs. From the articulation of the Marshall Plan to the creation of the Common Market and all steps in between (including the foundations of the EPU, the OEEC, and the ECSC) political factors had precedence over economic factors. The second mitigating factor, in Lundestad's opinion, was that European economic integration could actually benefit the United States. While the United States was less enthusiastic towards the Common Market after 1958-1959 because of balance of payments problems, Lundestad believes some scholars have overstated the significance of economic considerations. According the State Department, political considerations were of primary importance and the economic health of the United States involved more variables than just the balance of payments. In spite of continued economic difficulties in the United States, and growing skepticism of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations towards Europe, a change in policy did not occur until 1971 – not 1958-59 as Alan Milward and Federico Romero have suggested. [7] Although Nixon appreciated the political significance of the Common Market, he was also aware of its economic consequences. The 1971 Foreign Policy report – at the behest of the Departments of Agriculture, Treasury, and Commerce – stated that in spite of political benefits, "European unity will also pose problems for American policy". According to Lundestad, it was in 1971 – not in 1958/59 – that one could argue that economic concerns took precedence over political considerations. [8]

The final section opens by addressing the significance of continued American support of European integration. In Lundestad's opinion the "American impulse was a most important driving force," in which the US acted as a "balancer" and "the ultimate arbiter," as was exemplified in particular by the central question of post-World War II Europe: the German issue. Here the United States played a primary role and by examining this episode Lundestad directly challenges Milward's conclusion that the United States played only a minor role in European economic integration. Thus, political considerations took precedence over economic factors; consequently, economic constructions were placed within the Atlantic framework. As Lundestad effectively points out "it is difficult to believe that European integration could have taken place without American backing." [9]

Lundestad continues his analysis addressing the issue of Atlanticism, arguing that the OEEC/OECD, GATT, and NATO provided the framework into which the EEC had to be fitted and developed. Although both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations discussed the idea of a true Atlantic union, it was deemed unnecessary and a possible threat to Continental European integration. Furthermore, an Atlantic union would reduce American sovereignty; thus Congress would never accept it. Lundestad then addresses the importance of Atlantic communities for successful Continental integration. According to Lundestad, if no Atlantic framework existed containing the Marshall Plan and NATO, there would be no EEC. Lundestad provides statements from Dulles, a confirmed advocate of supranationalism, which contrad this view. Dulles believed that if the United States had not intervened in European affairs, a true United States of Europe – which he desired – might have been created. Lundestad disagrees, opining that the Atlantic structures provided a forum for Franco-German cooperation. In a reference to the work of John Lewis Gaddis, Lundestad points out that Atlantic structures were also necessary not only for successful integration, but also for the "long peace." [10]

The author then moves to a discussion of the American "empire" and its policy towards Europe. Although Lundestad believes the United States was a unique imperial power, it was an empire nonetheless. Lundestad is most concerned with why the United States would continually support something (a European community) which could challenge its pre-eminence. In spite of its "imperial" concerns, the United States supported European integration for two reasons. First, America didn't perceive itself as an imperial power, and European integration was seen as a version of American federalism. Second, Lundestad believes that "how" the US interpreted its great power needs affected its European policy. For example, European integration was the most effective way of organizing the containment of the USSR and could also prevent a rapprochement between the USSR and Germany. Finally, European integration was a more efficient way to influence Europe and would cause the

smallest possible expense for the US.

Lundestad concludes by addressing the future possibilities for American influence over continued European integration. Although US influence in Europe may have waned since 1945, the US still plays a significant role. Most importantly, the purpose of NATO still exists. Although the European Union wants a greater say in NATO and a common security and foreign policy for the community, the United States is still necessary, since it is "the only remaining superpower." [11] However, Lundestad closes by asserting that once the European Union members seriously question the Atlantic framework, American support for the EU will falter; subsequently, although the Cold War is over, there are still limits as to how far Washington will allow the EU to move in the security realm. Thus, the EU is still part of America's unique empire.

Lundestad has written the most complete general history of American policy towards European integration. According to Lundestad, the United States promoted European integration "strongly" until the mid-1960s, and less so after that (approximately 1962-1963). Furthermore, the American-European relationship was determined by three significant turning points: 1949-50 (creation of the European Coal and Steel Community), 1962-63 (the Gaullist challenge to American supremacy in NATO), and 1969-70 (Nixon's alteration of US policy towards Europe). Also, Lundestad's volume makes a significant contribution to the theoretical study of European integration and he addresses both "traditionalist" and "revisionist" schools of integration scholarship, weighing in on the standard *primat der innenpolitik* v. *primat der aussenpolitik* debate. Although numerous traditionalist scholars may have overstated the role of the United States in European integration, in Lundestad's estimation the revisionists who stress the primacy of European economic factors (in particular Alan Milward) and downplay the American role have also constructed flawed arguments. [12] Finally, Lundestad sets forth an intriguing characterization of the United States' relationship with Western Europe after World War II. The United States acted in a unique manner as an imperial power towards Western Europe. Lundestad believes the goals of promoting political stability and open markets while containing the possible threats from Germany and the Soviet Union correlate with the goals of more familiar imperial powers. This is the weakest of Lundestad's four arguments. He never fully defines why the United States is an empire, and his rationale for characterizing the United States as a "unique" imperial power is vague at best. In spite of this shortcoming, Lundestad accomplishes the other three tasks with ease. Consequently, Lundestad has written the best account to date of the role of the United States in the European integration process.

Notes:

[1]. See John Gillingham, *Coal, Steel, and the Rebirth of Europe, 1945-1955: The Germans and the French from the Ruhr Conflict to Economic Community*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; Michael Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Europe, 1947-1952*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; and Pascaline Winand, *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe*, London: Macmillan, 1993.

[2]. Lundestad, p. 137.

[3]. Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 160.

[4]. Lundestad, p. 72-73.

[5]. Ibid., p. 79.

[6]. Ibid., p. 111.

[7]. Ibid., p. 87.

[8]. Ibid., p. 98.

[9]. See Lundestad's Chapter 10, p. 126-145.

[10]. Ibid., p. 153.

[11]. Ibid., p. 168.

[12]. Lundestad's cites Ernst van der Beugel, David Ellwood, Derek Urwin, and Richard Vaughan as representatives of traditionalist thought here, and Alan Milward, Marvin Dedman, and Richard Griffiths as revisionists, p. 126-129.

Citation: Todd Alan Good. Review of Geir, Lundestad;, *"Empire" by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997*. H-Diplo, H-Net Reviews. March, 2001.

URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=5009